



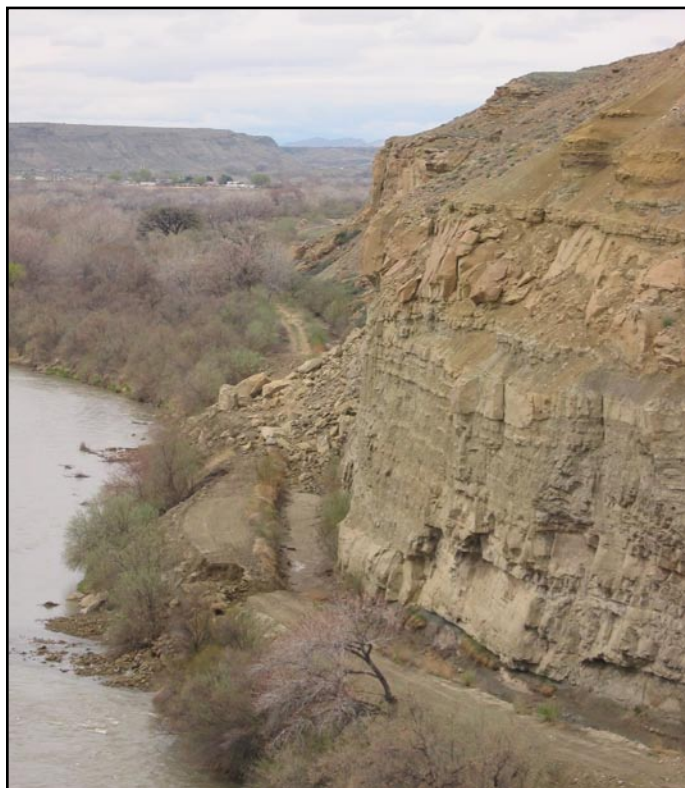
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## In times of need, hug a regulator

Bruce Hill Jr., and Kelsey Seeger, USACE Public Affairs



Photos by Deanna Cummings, USACE Durango Regulatory Office

**Above are photos taken before and after of a rockslide clearing in the Farmington, NM area in April. The slide sent boulders the size of small automobiles crashing into a ditch, cutting off a critical water supply to hundreds of residents. New Mexico Governor, Bill Richardson, declared an emergency due to the rock slide cutting off the natural water flow. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Albuquerque District worked several additional hours to issue the emergency permit that would allow for the safe removal of the rock, without adversely impacting the surrounding ecosystem.**

What do a recent rockslide, Governor Bill Richardson, a declared emergency, local farmers, the Navajo nation, and endangered species all have in common?

They were all factors leading to the issuance of an emergency permit by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory office in Albuquerque.

A rockslide clogged a Farmington, New Mexico irrigation canal over-

night April 10, blocking a critical water supply affecting as many as 600 shareholders, most of them farmers and members of the Farmers Mutual Ditch Company (FMDC). The rock slide stifled a supplemental water flow to more than 10,000 residents prompting Governor Bill Richardson to sign a declaration of disaster April 24, releasing \$750,000 to help fund repairs by the FMDC on the irrigation system.

Though the Corps was able to issue an emergency 404 permit by April 20, ahead of the Governor's declaration, issuing the permit was not easy.

Not only did the rockslide block the irrigation ditch, but the rocks and boulders could not be completely discharged into the river due to the consequences it might have on two endangered fish species, two. . .

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# From the Field

## Corps helps open new AGE facility



Photo by Airman Erik Cardenas

**Left to right, Colonel Scott West, 27th Fighter Wing commander, Maj. James Rich, 27th Equipment Maintenance Squadron commander, Major Chad Neidig, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Emily Snyder, 27th Civil Engineer Squadron, Randy Kamrady, project contractor, and Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Wood, 27th CES commander, cut the ribbon to open the Cannon Air Force Base new Aircraft Ground Equipment facility. The new complex has 500 outdoor covered parking spots for maintenance and storage, doubling previous indoor/outdoor square footage. An overhead hoist also spans the entire shop.**

## Regulator... *continued from cover*

endangered bird species, and upon the Navajo Nation which had some claim to the river, said Deanna Cummings, USACE Chief of Durango Regulatory Office.

The rocks could not just be dumped in another area because it could harm a nearby wetland area. The rocks were too sizeable and numerous to truck them all out, and the farmers desperately needed to water their crops.

"It took much longer than an emergency permit would usually take due to complications," said Cummings.

The rock face, 80 to 100 feet high, gave way late night or early morning, delivering boulders the size of small automobiles blocking the entire FMDC ditch. Eventually the permit would allow the FMDC to discharge some of the rock into the river and

another ditch area.

"In part due to the wetlands area, the Corps had to get involved as per section 404 of the Clean Water Act. There was going to be a discharge of fill material into the waters (San Juan River) of the United States, which would have involved the river and the adjacent wetlands," said Don Borda, USACE Albuquerque District Chief of Regulatory Branch.

This involved consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the Navajo Nation. A USACE tiger team pulled together by District Engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Bruce A. Estok, consisted of Champe Green, Art Maestas, Bruce Beach and Cummings, who all talked the situation through with local officials to determine the work that would be required to reopen

the ditch.

Dan Flack, a principle engineer who was hired by the FDMC as a consultant, noticed the extra effort that the Corps went through in order to get the permit ready for this crisis.

"They did a real timely review," he said. "I know they worked extra hours to get the permit to go through."

The complex process required to get an emergency 404 permit took an intense amount of work. Especially for the regulators who worked late into the evenings and on the weekend to establish the necessary foundations for the permit.

"In the process of approving and determining a permit, the people in regulatory go the extra mile," said Cummings. "For the extra effort we go through, we could use a hug."

